

PROTECT THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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Michigan AFSCME opposes HJR CC and SJR V which demand a United States Constitutional Convention. The resolutions also call for a federal constitutional amendment requiring that Congress appropriate only the amount of anticipated revenues in that year. Here's why.

Limited convention

A federal constitutional convention cannot be limited to one issue as urged by these resolutions. The resolutions would therefore put our 200 plus year republic into danger and disarray. As the most powerful nation on earth that would cause enormous turmoil throughout the entire world. Our unstable world does not need additional instability.

Our current constitution was written by a convention that was called for the limited purpose of proposing amendments to the Articles of Confederation.

Here is what the late Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote on the topic:

" ... There is no way to effectively limit or muzzle the actions of a constitutional convention. The convention could make its own rules and set its own agenda. Congress might try to limit the convention to one amendment or one issue, but there is no way to assure that the convention would obey. After a convention is convened, it will be too late to stop the convention if we don't like its agenda."

Controversial issues from abortion to gun control to the popular election of United States Senators (some of urged that we return to

appointment by Legislatures) would all be up for grabs.

Balanced budget

One of the great fallacies continually perpetrated by proponents of a federal "balanced budget" amendment is that the states (49 of them), families and businesses balance their budgets in the way a federal constitutional requirement would likely work. Michigan is required to balance its *operating* budget but not its entire budget. We routinely borrow money and pay it back over time for numerous purposes – some backed up by the full faith and credit of the state. This bonded indebtedness is larger than the entire state's general fund budget – around \$23 billion according to the state treasurer's report – and is used for long term projects like buildings and for parks, clean-up projects and more.

And the State balances its operating budget only by relying on *federal* money. Indeed, according to the House Fiscal Agency over \$19 billion of our current state budget is paid for by federal dollars.

Families spend money earned in one year to pay for expenses in another through things like mortgages, car loans, credit card debt and more. College loans are essential in today's world.

Businesses routinely use debt and unbalanced budgets both for start up and to get over rough spots. We are all aware of the fact that Ford Motor Car Company is the only major Detroit auto company to survive the great recession

without taxpayer assistance – choosing instead to borrow against virtually all its assets instead.

It is simply a myth to suggest that the federal government is the only entity that uses debt as a financing method.

While we can be critical of the amount of debt the federal government has, it would be impossible to maintain our economy, and the economy of the world without some debt. Our goal should be to better manage debt, not to pretend we can eliminate it all together.

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